## Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for determining a priority classification of a burst at a physical interface of a communications device, comprising the steps of:

detecting an identifier from the burst at the physical interface; and matching said identifier to a priority indicator to determine the priority classification.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said matching step further comprises the step of:

querying a memory to determine said priority indicator.

- 3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of: storing the burst prior to said detecting step.
- 4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting step further comprises the step of parsing a header associated with the burst to detect said identifier.
- 5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said identifier is associated with a service.
- 6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said identifier is associated with a quality of service.
- 7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said identifier is associated with a burst source.

- 8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said identifier is associated with at least two of a service, a quality of service, and a burst source.
- 9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said priority indicator represents one of two levels of priority.
- 10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said priority indicator represents one of three or more levels of priority.
  - 11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of: forwarding the burst to a priority queue associated with said priority indicator.
  - 12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of: postpending said priority indicator to the burst prior to said forwarding step.
- 13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the burst is an electromagnetic signal.
  - 14. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the burst is an optical signal.
- 15. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the burst is an electronic signal.
- 16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the burst includes voice over an Internet protocol signal.
- 17. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the burst includes video conferencing signals.
- 18. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the burst includes a webcast video production.
- 19. (Currently Amended) A method for determining a priority classification of a burst at a physical interface of a communications device, comprising the steps of:

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detecting an identifier from the burst at the physical interface; and matching said identifier to a priority indicator, said matching being implemented prior to protocol processing the burst.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for determining a priority classification of a plurality of bursts at a physical interface to a headend controller within a cable modem network, comprising the steps of:

processing the plurality of bursts at the physical interface to detect an identifier from each burst; and

matching said identifier from each burst to a priority indicator, wherein said priority indicator represents one of two or more available priority levels.

- 21. (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising the step of:

  providing a plurality of priority queues, each priority queue being associated with at least one priority indicator.
- 22. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of: forwarding each burst to one of said plurality of priority queues associated with said priority indicator from said matching step.
- 23. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of:
  servicing said plurality of priority queues according to a designated order of priority.
  - 24. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of:

matched to a priority indicator.

servicing said plurality of priority queues to empty each higher priority queue prior to servicing a lower priority queue.

25. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of:

servicing said plurality of queues such that each higher priority queue is serviced at a higher frequency than each lower priority queue.

- 26. (Currently Amended) A system for determining a priority classification of a burst at a physical interface of a communications device, comprising:
  - a burst receiver for receiving the burst at the physical interface; and
    a classifier for detecting an identifier from the burst, wherein said identifier is
    - 27. (Original) The system of claim 26, further comprising:

a priority storage for storing information related to said identifier, wherein said priority storage is interoperable with said classifier to match said identifier to a priority indicator.

- 28. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 27, wherein said priority storage includes a lookup table.
- 29. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 27, wherein said priority storage includes records of all assigned identifiers and corresponding services or burst sources.
  - 30. (Original) The system of claim 26, further comprising:

a high priority queue associated with a high priority indicator, wherein said high priority queue receives the burst if said identifier matches said high priority indicator; and a low priority queue associated with a low priority indicator, wherein said low priority queue receives the burst if said identifier matches said low priority indicator.

## 31. (Original) The system of claim 26, further comprising:

a plurality of priority queues, wherein each priority queue is associated with at least one priority indicator and interoperable with said classifier to receive the burst if said identifier matches a priority indicator associated with said priority queue.

- 32. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said plurality of priority queues is positioned external to the communications device.
- 33. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein each of said plurality of priority queues is an internal component of the communications device.